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August 6, 2008

United States Department of Agriculture  
Child Nutrition Act Reauthorization

To Whom It May Concern,


Galliker Dairy Company, headquartered in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, was founded in 1914 and is a third generation, family owned, regional business. Galliker's also owns and operates a division located in Cumberland, Maryland – the Potomac Farms Dairy. The dairy specializes in processing and distributing milk, dairy products, ice cream and iced tea. Galliker products are available for sale in nine states – West Central Pennsylvania, as well as portions of Maryland, Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, New Jersey, Delaware and New York. The Dairy buys milk from over 120 independent milk producers and serves over 100 school districts within our market areas.

Not only is school milk crucial to our business, it is also vital to the health and wellness of children in our communities. The USDA's School Lunch Program has a lot of participation in our community, and participation in the School Breakfast Program is growing. These programs are especially important for the school districts we serve within the rural areas of Pennsylvania, Maryland and West Virginia, where the economy is not good, and these programs provide healthy meal options for kids. I am concerned that for some kids, the milk they consume through these programs is the only milk they consume all day.

With all of the less nutritious beverages that are highly marketed and compete with milk, it is important that low fat flavored milk retain its taste appeal while still minimizing calories. For some children, milk at school is the only time of day they get milk. That is why we offer different varieties of milk to please children's palates while providing the same wholesome nutrition they need from milk. Not only do we offer 1% and non-fat milk, we also offer a 160-calorie low-fat chocolate milk, a 1% vanilla milk and 1% strawberry milk. These low calorie flavored milks are not only delicious and enjoyed by children in school; they are healthy, nutritious and comply with current School Wellness Policy guidelines. We believe it is important to offer these lower calorie milk options in order to stop the progression of Type II Diabetes and obesity among our nation's children.

Finally, I ask that the USDA maintain adequate funding for higher nutrition goals so that milk remains a part of these vital wellness programs. This is important both for nutrition education, as well as fully funding the WIC program and ensuring that school districts have the necessary resources to purchase milk without having to compromise other components of a healthy meal. Milk is a critical piece in maintaining a healthy diet, as it provides nine essential vitamins, minerals and as a nutrient dense food, it is far too valuable to be left out of these programs. In order to facilitate a shift from the obesity epidemic plaguing our country to the promotion of a healthy diet and active lifestyle for all Americans, regardless of their income bracket, these programs are crucial and need to be given priority in terms of federal funding and efficient management. At Galliker's, we see these programs working in our communities to better the lives of the people who depend on them, and we know milk is helping them achieve a healthy diet and lifestyle. I appreciate the opportunity to share this information. Thank you for your role in helping ensure these programs continue to serve our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Louis G. Galliker".

Louis G. Galliker  
Chairman & President